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“BRINGING THE FIRST-BEGOTTEN INTO THE WORLD.”

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THE passage which suggests our subject, namely Heb. 1:6, is one of acknowledged difficulty. Commentators so widely separated as Moses Stuart and Bishop Westcott characterize it in similar terms. The former writes: “A passage replete with difficulties;” the latter, that “it is beset by difficulty.” Delitzsch says: “The passage (1:6) is difficult.” Its difficulties are those of determining (1) from what source are derived the cited words: “And let all the angels of God worship him,” and (2) to what event in the history of the Son of God is the citation applied, and which is described in the passage by the phrase “bringing the first-begotten into the world.” There are also subordinate difficulties of words and construction, which enter into the discussion of these questions. It is proposed in this paper to examine the answers which have been given to the above questions, to offer some suggestions toward the elucidation of the passage, and to inquire into the bearing of the whole passage on the question of the authorship of the epistle in which it occurs.

1. *The source whence was derived the citation: “And let all the angels of God worship him.”*—“The evasion that no citation is made at all, but that our author clothes a truth made known to him in some other way in words borrowed from the Septuagint is based on self-deception. It is a real *bona fide* citation” (Delitzsch). Two views have been offered as to the source of the citation: one, that the words are taken from Ps. 97:7; the other, that they are taken from the Septuagint reading of Deut. 32:43, and are words which are not found in any extant manuscript of the Hebrew Bible. “The exact phrase is found in

the Vatican text of an addition made to the Hebrew in Deut. 32:43 by the Septuagint version” (Westcott). For the purpose of comparison we give the three passages :

Heb. 1:6 : καὶ προσκυνήσάτωσαν αὐτῷ πάντες ἄγγελοι θεοῦ.

Deut. 32:43 : καὶ προσκυνήσάτωσαν αὐτῷ πάντες ἄγγελοι θεοῦ.

Ps. 97:7 : προσκυνήσατε αὐτῷ πάντες οἱ ἄγγελοι αὐτοῦ.

In the last passage ἄγγελοι stands for the Heb. *Elohim*, and the English rendering of the passage is, “Worship him, all ye gods.” A comparison of the passages shows that, while the citation differs materially, and in several points, from the words of the psalm, the exact phrase occurs in Deuteronomy. A fatal objection to the view that the citation is from the psalm is the presence of καὶ in the citation. Its omission from the original phrase would be intelligible, but otherwise its addition thereto, when it clearly is not required for the purpose of the argument. A reference to a few representative commentators will suffice to show the division of views on this part of the subject. Calvin and Hammond make no reference to the words in Deuteronomy and were apparently not aware of their existence. Moses Stuart, though aware of their existence, is disinclined to admit that the author of Hebrews quoted, as Scripture, words which are not found in the Hebrew Bible, and decides in favor of the psalm as the source of the citation. Davidson and Westcott pronounce in favor of the view that the citation is from Deuteronomy, but they concede to the other view that the words of the psalm were spoken from an identical point of view. “Most probably the exact words are taken from Deuteronomy. The point of view of the psalm is the same” (Davidson). “It may be added that the thought both in Deuteronomy and the psalm is the same” (Westcott).

The ground on which this concession is made to rest disappears on examination of the passages. If it were granted that *Elohim* in the Old Testament frequently means or includes angels, on what principle of interpretation, it may be asked, can an invitation by the psalmist that all the angels should worship Jehovah be made to signify a summons from Jehovah that all

the angels of God should worship the Son? The argument, in this part of the epistle, clearly requires a scriptural quotation, the reference of which to the Son, or the Messiah, could not be disputed by the readers of the epistle.

The required conditions are met in the passage in Deuteronomy (LXX), which is here given in full :

εὐφράνθητε οὐρανοὶ ἅμα αὐτῷ,
καὶ προσκυνησάτωσαν αὐτῷ πάντες ἄγγελοι θεοῦ
εὐφράνθητε ἔθνη μετὰ τοῦ λαοῦ αὐτοῦ
καὶ ἐνισχυσάτωσαν αὐτῷ πάντες υἱοὶ θεοῦ.¹

For, let the question be asked, having the whole passage in view, who is he that is referred to four times by the Greek *αὐτός*? The speaker is Jehovah, who in the context (vs. 39) says: "See now that I, even I, am he, and there is no God with me." It is Jehovah, therefore, who invites the heavens to rejoice with "him," and summonses all the angels of God to worship "him," the nations are called to rejoice with "his" people, and all the sons of God to be strong in "him." Who is this third person? He is regarded by Jehovah as distinct from himself; he is not an angel, for they are bid to worship him; he owns a people and is therefore above them; he is not merely "a" son of God, for they are bid to be strong in him. The answer to the question is found in the passage, and it is an inference which could not be disputed by the readers of the epistle. He can be none other than "the first-begotten." "He bringeth the first-begotten into the world." Striking confirmation of the view that the whole passage was regarded by the Jews as Messianic is given by a remarkable clause added thereto in the Targum: "He by his word shall atone for his people, and for his land." The considerations here urged only give additional support to the view, in which all critics would now probably agree, that the citation in Heb. 1:6 is from the Septuagint version of Deut. 32:43.

¹[It should be noted that the author follows Tischendorf's edition of the LXX. Swete's edition differs in that it interchanges 2^δ and 4^δ and prints πάντες only once.]

2. *To what event in the history of the Son of God is the citation applied by the author of the epistle?*—Two answers have been given: one, that the application is to the occasion of the birth of Jesus; the other, that the reference is to the second advent. The advocates of the former view rely on the apparent meaning of the phraseology which is employed, and on the recorded fact that angels did appear at the birth of Jesus, and Saul. The advocates of the latter view rely on the meaning and position in the sentence of *πάλιν*, which can only, it is said, mean "bringing in again;" and they further urge the future reference of the subjunctive aorist with *ᾧταν*. The difficulty of determining the reference is shown by the fact that some critics having once advocated one of these views have afterwards retracted and advocated the other. The future reference of *ᾧταν* with the conjunctive in this place does not, however, necessitate that the event should be future to the date of writing the epistle. It is a frequent *usus loquendi* for a writer to put himself into the position of the speaker whose words he quotes, and view an event from his point of view. When Jehovah spoke the words recorded in the Song of Moses, "bringing the first-begotten into the world" was regarded as a future event, and the author of the epistle may have put himself into the position of the speaker of the words he cites, and express himself as from that point of vision.

Moreover, both of the views which have been above referred to are open to the following fatal objection. If it were granted that the record in the gospels implied that all the angels of God were commanded to worship the Son at his birth, and that, in another writing of the New Testament, it was asserted that they will be commanded to worship him at his second coming, always assuming these records to be in the hands of the readers of the epistle, the citing of these testimonies would not meet the requirements of the argument in hand. The writings of apostles were not, in the first century, recognized as of divine authority. The thesis that the Son, whom the readers of the epistle from the beginning understood the writer to identify with Jesus, although that name had not hitherto been men-

tioned, was an object of worship to the angels of God, required that evidence of its truth should be found in the Old Testament Scriptures. Words that were acknowledged, by both writer and readers, as divine revelation and of divine authority would alone suffice to establish the truth of an assertion so startling as (for to this the argument was seen to lead) that Jesus of Nazareth was an object of worship to all the angels of God.

To what event, then, do the words, *ὅταν δὲ πάλιν εἰσαγάγῃ τὸν πρωτότοκον εἰς τὴν οἰκουμένην*, refer? Let it be noted that it is not said *εἰς τὸν κόσμον*. The word *οἰκουμένη* occurs in this epistle only in 2:5, where it is apparently equivalent to *αἰών*. In other writings of the New Testament it follows the classical usage — the Greek world as opposed to the barbarian, and in later usage, the Roman world. Dr. Westcott's note is exhaustive on its usage. "The word is used for the world so far as it is a seat of settled government, the 'civilized world.'" Thus, in Greek writers, it is used characteristically for the countries occupied by Greeks, as distinguished from those occupied by barbarians, and at a later time for the Roman empire. Hence it came to be used of a limited district, defined, as we should say, by a specific civilization. Cf. Luke 2:1; Ex. 16:35, *ἕως ἡλθον εἰς τὴν οἰκουμένην*, "to the borders of the land of Canaan."¹ If it could be assumed that the words quoted by Dr. Westcott from the Septuagint were in the apostle's mind, we might interpret the phrase under consideration to mean "bringing the first-begotten into the (promised) land." The limited reference of *οἰκουμένη* as compared with *κόσμος* must, however, be recognized; it is required by its usage, and is a limitation made familiar to Englishmen by the contrast of "œcumenical" with "universal." We, therefore, take the phrase to signify "bringing the first-begotten into the Jewish world" — the introduction of the first-begotten to the Mosaic age (*αἰών*); the introduction of the Son as first-begotten to the cognizance of the Jewish people, to the

¹ The occurrence, in 2:5, of *οἰκουμένη*, with *μέλλουσα* added, in an undisputed reference to the Christian dispensation, determines its reference, when used as it is in this passage without the qualifying part, to be to a former — the Jewish — dispensation.

platform of divine revelation. At the utterance of the Song of Moses, for the first time in history, was the Messiah introduced into Jewish thought, as the first-begotten Son of God. I venture to suggest that the reference in the passage is neither to the birth of Christ nor to his second coming, but to the introduction of the Messiah, as the first-begotten Son of God, to the Jewish world, and to Jewish thought, at the period of the utterance of the Song of Moses.

Let inquiry now be made into the bearing of the passage we have been considering on the question of the authorship of the epistle in which it occurs. Paulinists have urged (Moses Stuart, Lewin, Delitzsch, etc.) that the use of *πάλιν* in the introduction of a succession of passages, in evidence of an assertion, is distinctive of Paul. Lewin and Delitzsch call attention also to the fact that Paul in Romans quotes a line from the same verse as that in Heb. 1:6. The point is not pursued to any farther length. The coincidences are not regarded by anti-Paulinists to have any weight on the question of authorship, and are mentioned without comment. "Part of the same verse (Deut. 32:43) is quoted by St. Paul in Rom. 15:10." "Contiguous quotations from Deut. 32:35 are separated by *καὶ πάλιν* in 10:30" (Westcott). It is probable that, owing to the fact that both parties in the controversy have agreed to assign the epistle to a late date, about 67 A. D., the considerations attaching to these coincidences lose significance. It has probably been regarded to be as likely that a disciple of Paul should adopt these peculiarities, from a familiarity with his writings, as that Paul should recur to them many years after they had been first adopted, while several epistles intervene where they do not occur. The coincidences referred to, however, cannot be explained away, or pronounced to be of little weight, if it may be believed that Hebrews will admit of an earlier date than that usually assigned to its production. This is the view from which the passage will here be regarded — a view which was discussed by the present writer in a series of papers in the *Thinker* (1893, 1894) — that Hebrews is the joint production of Paul and Luke, the latter acting, not as amanuensis to the great apostle, but as redactor of, or com-

mentator on, the apostolic thoughts, and that this collaboration took place during the imprisonment of the former at Cæsarea, 58-60 A. D. The epistle to the Hebrews, if this view be correct, therefore follows, in the order of Paul's epistles, the epistle to the Romans, and precedes the epistles of the Roman imprisonment. Evidence of primary importance and weight in favor of this view is that of the Vatican manuscript B, where the numbers of the sections show that "Hebrews" was originally inserted between Galatians and Ephesians.

From this point of view the passage we have been considering becomes important and striking evidence of the Pauline authorship of the epistle to the Hebrews, and of the correctness of the date 58-60 A. D.

We have already seen that it is admitted that "part of the same verse (Deut. 32:43) is quoted by St. Paul in Rom. 15:10" (Westcott). The words quoted in Romans are: "Rejoice, ye nations, with his people," and they follow the line, "And let all the angels of God worship him." During the period of his missionary journeys the Song of Moses appears to have been much in Paul's mind, and was the source of frequent quotations. His epistles may be chronologically arranged according to the order of his citations from this song. "The rock," in 1 Cor. 10:4, and the words, "they sacrifice to devils, and not to God," in 1 Cor. 10:20, are from vss. 4 and 17, respectively, of the song. The words in 2 Cor. 7:5, "without were fightings, within were fears," are an echo of vs. 25 of the song. In the epistle to the Romans (12:19) the apostle quotes vs. 35, "Vengeance is mine, I will repay, saith the Lord." The same words are quoted in Heb. 10:30. The citation differs from the Hebrew text, and also from the Septuagint, but the words are precisely identical in both epistles. The explanation which is given by anti-Paulinists of this striking evidence of the identical authorship of both epistles is that "the author may have been familiar with the epistle to the Romans" (Davidson), or "that the passage had taken this form in practical use" (Westcott). It may safely be said to be a more reasonable explanation that the same author, either from having adopted a variation of the original, or from

relying on his memory of the words of a song greatly in his mind at a certain period, made use of the same form in two epistles which proceeded from him in close succession. At the end of Romans (15:10) Paul reaches the last verse of Moses' song and quotes, "Rejoice, ye nations, with his people." With the exception of the chapter of salutations (Rom., chap. 16), the next chapter produced by him (according to the theory above referred to) is the first of Hebrews, and in the opening verses of that chapter he quotes from the same verse the words which are immediately connected with and precede those quoted at the close of Romans, namely the line, "And let all the angels of God worship him."

The closer these two passages are examined, the more striking becomes the evidence that the use of these citations was by the same author in the two epistles, Romans and Hebrews. The word *πρωτότοκος* is a favorite appellation of the Son of God by Paul (Rom. 8:29; Col. 1:15, 18). Both in Romans and Hebrews the lines which were quoted from Deut., chap. 32, are introduced by *πάλιν*—a peculiarity distinctive of Paul (1 Cor. 3:20), which occurs frequently in Hebrews. And, finally, the closing words of the Song of Moses are both in Romans and Hebrews attributed to God as the speaker, *καὶ πάλιν λέγει* (Rom. 15:10), *ὅταν δὲ πάλιν . . . λέγει* (Heb. 1:6). More striking and convincing evidence of identical authorship cannot, we venture to submit, be shown in any two of the acknowledged epistles of Paul.

The citations from the Song of Moses made in the epistles of the New Testament give sufficient ground for demanding that the question of the authorship of the epistle to the Hebrews should be reopened, and that the almost unanimous verdict of recent criticism should be reexamined. It is not suggested that the verdict of Erasmus can be set aside, that the language and style of the epistle are not of Paul. But it does not follow from this position, as has been assumed by English critics, that Paul had no share in the production of the epistle, and that it has to be ascribed to another author. There remains the alternative theory of collaboration in its production, and the weighty

evidence of the Vatican manuscript B, above referred to, which manifestly has not been appreciated, indicates unmistakably where such collaboration could have taken place, by pointing to an early, and perhaps nearly contemporary, tradition that the epistle is of Paul, and that its place among his epistles is prior to those of the Roman imprisonment. Our study of the passage Heb. 1:6, and the evidence of the Vatican manuscript B, are in agreement in pointing to Cæsarea as the place where, and 58–60 A. D. as the time when, with Luke as collaborator, Paul produced the epistle to the Hebrews.